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THE

MESSAGE OF TENNYSON

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THE

MESSAGE OF TENNYSON

A SERMON

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, APRIL 30, 1893

BY

WILLIAM BOYD CARPENTER, D.D.

BISHOP OF RIPON, HON. D.C.L. OXON

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis? . . .
. . . Cui liquidam pater
Vocem cum cithara dedit.

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THE MESSAGE OF TENNYSON

"It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord . . . . that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord."—2 CHRONICLES v. 13.

THE words record a striking and suggestive incident. A great festival was being held. The one great object, on the part of those responsible for the musical part of the festival was to produce that unity of sound which gives such impressiveness to the rendering of all musical work. And the historian tells us that when all the various instruments and voices were made to unite in one splendid utterance; when singers and musicians were as one, bringing their various gifts and various powers so completely into harmony that it seemed as though that vast number sang with but one voice, and as from one heart—then the sign of the glory of their nation, the symbol of the presence of God, was revealed among

them, the Shechinah, the mysterious token which had guided their forefathers through the wilderness was seen, then the cloud filled the house, even the House of the Lord.

The incident has a significance beyond its bearing on the circumstances of the moment. I imagine that in the writer's mind it carried a far deeper meaning than a mere passing approval of the wonderful unison of praise which found expression in the worship of that day ; for him the incident was a crowning point in the story of the growing greatness of Israel. The past had been a past of division, of doubt, and of danger. Enemies from without had threatened the frontier of Israel ; rival jealousies had divided and undermined her power. But at length, under the military genius of David, and afterwards under the vigorous statesmanship of Solomon, the consolidated kingdom realised the benefits of union among the tribes. And on the day of thanksgiving the religious service expressed not merely the harmony of voices and instruments, but the great spirit of union which pervaded the whole people. And when at length the great and wide federation of hearts was realised, then the nation was fit to go forward upon its path of progress and achieve its destiny. In that hour the true climax of Israel's glory seemed to the historian to be reached, and the

symbol of the Divine presence, which had for long been withdrawn, appeared in his eyes to visit the land once more. He saw in the spirit of union which filled all hearts and inspired all voices for common worship an augury of advancing prosperity. He saw that with such a people God could dwell. He saw the cloud which betokened the Divine presence. "The House of the Lord was filled with the glory."

We cannot limit the thoughts thus suggested to the history of Israel only. In such incidents there may be found some guiding principle. And the principle which this incident suggests is one which if I mistake not covers all life. It is this: You cannot expect to find the true power, the highest ripening of capacity, the full glory of any organised society or organic life save in the unification of the powers of that organism. An illustration may help us. Take, for instance, the artistic life. The putting of colours on the canvas might be described as part of the function of the artist, but his true function goes far beyond this, and demands more than mere hand-work. He must be able to blend colours together into a harmony which brings pleasure to the eye and inspiring thoughts to the heart. Glory rests upon his work in proportion as he realises on his canvas this double harmony of thought and form.

Take another illustration. What is the glory of light? It is seen most clearly when the harmony of the various prismatic hues are wrought into one pure beam of dazzling light. Or again, a cracked mirror gives back only scattered and inharmonious beams, but when the mirror is whole it gives back no broken image, but reflects a clear and faithful representation. It accomplishes then the purpose of its existence. In the unbroken harmony with which the parts are set together it can fulfil its object; and herein lies its glory.

This principle applies to all life. Let us notice it in individual life. Is it not one of the complaints which we often hear made that there is an enormous amount of waste power amongst human lives? It is a sad and true complaint. But what are the causes of this waste? It will be said, and rightly said, that vice is one of the great causes of this waste. For what is vice if it be not the drawing of the energy of a man's nature in some unworthy direction? Vice is of the nature of a disorder in the harmony of man's being. It withdraws some of man's energy from the true purpose of life. The powers of the vicious man are not as the powers of the chorus here, where the instruments of music and the voices, were all drawn together so as to seem like one voice.

The life of the vicious man becomes a discord and not a song.

But it is not only vice that thus breaks up human life. There is another cause of waste perhaps more common than positive vice, and that is the lack of a harmonious purpose prevailing over desire and thought. There are many lives that have never yet been dominated by any clear, distinct, recognised purpose. Many people go through the world and only drift from boyhood through manhood unto death. There is nothing in such lives that you can specify as having damaged or tarnished them with any special vice, but they are lives which have been simply useless and inglorious, and the reason is that they have never been knit into one by the governing ascendency of some great master passion or purpose. But whenever a human life has been directed by some great purpose, then what I may describe as the highest range of that life is reached and the glory of such an one's manhood is seen. Even in the case of men whose lives you could not describe as lives of perfect harmony, that is to say, men whose lives are not governed by the loftiest purpose, but in whom nevertheless some one great purpose rules, drawing even their lower powers under its direction, a kind of transient glory is attained! A man like Napoleon gathering together the strong forces of his intellect, his marvellous military gifts,

his wonderful energy, his persistence of purpose, notwithstanding his disregard of the higher moral impulses, still stands as one whose life was not wasted in half-hearted schemes, and vacillating and hesitating resolves. The life of such a man may be a ruin, but it is a ruin in which the master hand of the architect is seen. It is like the fragment of a broken song, whose very incompleteness makes us wish that the melody were wrought into completeness.

But when all the powers are drawn together, when the moral force and the intellectual force and the emotional force are dominated by some master-passion, then how bright and glorious may men's lives become! Men of high and lofty moral purpose, like Howard, devoting themselves to the welfare of their fellows; like Wilberforce, seeking out the cause of the oppressed; like the apostle (shall I say?) consecrating all his powers, his moral energies and his spiritual aspirations under the direction of one great purpose; men whose watchword has been *hoc unum*, this one thing I do—stand out among their fellows as men who have lived strong and memorable lives. These are the rare and noble men who have lived for one great purpose. Theirs are the lives that are filled with glory. Their powers being harmoniously devoted to one noble and high purpose, they have seemed to draw down the light and the

glory of heaven round about them, and their lives have been harmonious as "one grand sweet song!"

And it was so, I think, with him of whom I am bidden specially to speak to-day—of whom, had I been left to myself, I should hardly have dared to speak, for he stood upon his own lofty heights, and he was to us a great name and an inspiring influence, and to have known him and to have felt his influence was enough. But the harmony of which I have spoken was, I think, expressed in the life of Tennyson. Let me ask you to see how he gathered together his powers, concentrated them to one great, clear, and definite purpose, expanded the range of his sympathies, and drew into them the interests of the nation in which he lived, and the experiences of the age in which he was born, grasping firmly those great eternal verities, without which all the changes and chances of this mortal life are but a dumb, meaningless show. Guiding his powers by one steady purpose, he consecrated his gifts to the good of his generation, mindful of Him who had dowered him so highly, and in whom his faith remained unshaken till the last.

There are indeed other aspects of his life—the loyal friendship, the large generosity, the rare affection which must be a reverent memory to those who knew him personally. Admiration summoned love

to her side in those who in personal friendship learned something of his earnestness, his simplicity, and his tenderness of heart. But these are sacred things, and of these I do not speak ; I speak rather of that high and lofty purpose which animated his life, and gave force and harmony to his work.

And here I speak first of his life-purpose in relation to his art. His life was a life devoted to his art! The gift of poetry is often thought to be a casual and erratic power needing no industrious culture, and coming resistless and unsought, in moments of transient inspiration ; but, in the case of Tennyson you have a life wholly and deliberately and unwearyingly given to the cultivation of his art. Byron used to say that his genius was like a tiger, which leaped upon its prey, but, when baffled, turned growling back to the jungle. "It is," he said, "as if, once my purpose is baffled, the power and the will seem to forsake me." But with Tennyson there was no such easy surrender. *Hoc unum*—this one thing I do. Through years—mark those silent years when, having published one volume, he remained so long voiceless that people wondered—through those long years he ripened and perfected his powers. He was as one who, by stern determination and untiring purpose, at last "beat his music out."

We can carry this thought still further, we can

observe his spirit in the manipulation of his craft, and we feel how intense was his concentration of purpose. There are two ways in which the poet may be betrayed ; he may be betrayed by the facility of his power of versification, or he may be betrayed by the multitude of the thoughts which teem within his brain. We know how often this has been the case. We know, for example, how Moore was often betrayed by the very slippery facility of his verse into empty sounds from which the sense seemed to have evaporated. Shenstone, sweet singer as he was, fell sometimes a victim to the same vice. We know, on the other hand, that a man, strongly moved by high and noble thoughts, and ardent to set them before men, may become more eager to give forth his thoughts than anxious to cultivate niceties and beauties of expression. We can reverence the strong and the glowing genius of Browning, who was ready to forego—shall we say ?—the form of his art, if he could only reach the heart of those to whom he sang. But with Tennyson there was a marvellous combination of these powers ; with freedom of verse there was also a determination to maintain the substance of his thoughts, and he combined them together with that determined and happy art which made his song sweet to the ear, and helpful to the mind.

There are some who have said that in his case

overcarefulness was mistaken for perfection. I know not: it may be true that a conscientious worker may be betrayed into over-carefulness, but I would rather honour my art by over-carefulness than dishonour it by slovenliness! Surely it is one of the things which we, in this hurried generation, need to learn that if we would do a thing we must strive to do it nobly and well and with all our might; and that, at least, Tennyson has taught us. Dante used to say that he never once made use of a single word which did not express his thought, even though it was a word which would serve his rhyme. Tennyson said he never employed a single word, even though it expressed his thought, unless he had weighed it for its musical power, and its fitness in the line where it was to take its place. There is in this not merely the carefulness, but the conscientiousness of the artist, and the result of it is that in his work there is vitality. His words are like hands which grasp the thoughts, and give them to you clearly and without mistake; his words are like stones, not merely chosen for their size and fitness, but also for the harmony of their hue, and of their relation to the other stones in which they are to be fitted. And thus he is the pattern of one who loved the truth he had to tell and would not send her forth in mean and slovenly array;

but he arrayed her right royally, and apparelled her with splendour because he reverenced her so well. Like the knight, Gareth, of whom he sang,

> he bowed himself
> With all obedience—

(if I may alter the line)—

> to his art, and wrought
> All kind of service with such noble ease
> As graced the lowliest act in doing it.

And in this he set the example to us to reverence the work we have to do. In an age in which we are often content with things which we admit to be shabby and shoddy, when there is abroad an eager spirit that seeks to give the least and gain the most, when we are tempted to say that because of the over-pressure of our tasks anything will do for the purpose, it is a great and stimulating influence to have had one living among us who showed, down to the minutest details and departments of his craft, that high conscientiousness, that reverence for his art, which like wisdom is justified of her children. He dwelt apart, believing that he could thus the more thoroughly devote himself to the art which was his mistress. In that devoted life there came moments when bard-like he descended amongst us with his harp in hand, and whenever he came we gathered round him to hear the songs which he sung, for we knew that he had brooded over his

song, and weighed well his words, and therefore, when he sang, men listened. Thus did he bring the powers of his life and the gifts of his craft into wondrous harmony; heart and voice broke forth in such sweet unison, that he fitly set forth the glory of his art.

But, again, I ask you to look at him in relation to his nation and his age. It was a saying of Schiller's that "a poet must be the son of his age, but woe to him if he be its pupil or its favourite." The meaning is clear: the poet must be the son of his age—that is to say he must have real kinship and sympathy with the thoughts, the emotions, the stirring desires, and the rising aspirations which are round about him. Many a man is content to live a hundred years behind his time. Many a teacher so confines his studies to the past, that although what he has to say is true enough, it is not a truth which is spoken in the language of the age in which he lives. And thus, if a poet is to sing at all to the men to whom God has sent him to sing, he must be in that sense the child of his age.

Tennyson lived apart, but that living apart was no sign of his either being unappreciative of his age or discontented with it. He showed no bourgeois indifference to the great movements of the day. He knew well that provincialism was a narrow and destructive thing, prone to check the life

which should be left free to ripen to fitness and fulness. If it be a mistake, as unquestionably it is, to import larger considerations into the lesser squabbles, and to make the quality of village water to be a matter of dispute between rival parties of blue and buff, it is no less an error to imagine that the lesser interests of our small corner of the earth are of co-equal importance with the great events which are moving nations and stirring the hearts of men all over the world. Tennyson knew that well, and he had a scorn for those who

> take the rustic murmur of their bourg
> For the great wave that echoes round the world.

Therefore, when he separated himself from men he did not banish himself from their interests. It was an isolation for the purposes of his craft ; it was not an alienation from the thoughts and movements of his day. He still kept a keen eye and ready heart for the stirring interests of his time. You have only to recall how he sang, in his earliest songs warning men not to fall into subjection to the tyranny of the past. He was no vassal of the past, but the child of his age, and as a child of his age his face was set forward. As a child of his age he ripened with the ripening thoughts of the men and women round about him ; he realised that whatever the lavish inheritance of the past was, the future

was before us, and in reverent mindfulness of it we must do our present work. If the past was behind us the future was before us,

> For we are Ancients of the Earth,
> And in the morning of the Times.

And so hope rose within him, and his early poems gave expression to the aspirations which lived in the hearts of men. Sixty odd years ago, when men dreamed that wealth would no longer lie in unused heaps, and when upon the moving spirits of the time there dawned the hope of a coming age of peace, then his hope rose that

> Human things returning on themselves
> Move onward, leading up the golden year,

and he sang:

> Fly, happy, happy sails and bear the press;
> Fly happy with the Mission of the Cross;
> Knit land to land, and blowing heavenward,
> With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
> Enrich the markets of the golden year!

So in his young life he sang, as though he were, as he himself expressed it,

> A maiden knight, to whom is given
> Such hope, I know not fear.

He could sing for his age. He could also sing in sympathy with the national life. Look, for

example, when that great event—for it was a great event—occurred, and the youngest of us felt that the shield had dropped from Britannia's arm for we learned that the great duke was dead, then he gave voice to our emotions, and the thunder of the street and the echoes of the crying crowd were all heard in his ode; but stern and strong above it all was voiced the leading thought of the iron life:

> Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
> The path of duty was the way to glory.

Or, still later, when we knew that the blundering at home and the blundering abroad had placed our arms in jeopardy in the far-off cholera-stricken Crimea, and in the midst of it our men, gallant in the poverty of their resources, could yet strike a blow and make it known to the world that English valour was not dead, then he gave voice to that thrill of joy and that thrill of sorrow and that thrill of triumph which ran through England when the six hundred leaped "into the jaws of death," and

> Cannon to right of them,
> Cannon to left of them,
> Cannon in front of them,
> Volley'd and thunder'd.
> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs but to do and die!

And later, when the storm-clouds seemed to hover round the horizon, and men's hearts were

failing them for fear, and when doubt and uncertainty—the worst heritage which can come into national life—fell upon us, and in answer to the gathering war clouds, the volunteer movement showed that English patriotism was not dead, and that the nation of shopkeepers could prove themselves worthy of their ancestors, then his song cheered on the hundred thousand volunteers who leaped to arms.

But whilst thus reflecting the changes of the national life, he was always true to those great and dominant traditions of English life, the love of freedom and the reverence for order. Passionate in their attachment to liberty, the English people are no less passionately devoted to the spirit of order. They combine a strong instinct for freedom with a reverent attachment to the past, and they can pause even in the midst of their ardours to weigh and to judge before they act. This spirit he reflected.

> Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
> The thunders breaking at her feet;
> Above her shook the starry lights,
> She heard the torrents meet.
>
> Her open eyes desire the truth;
> The wisdom of a thousand years
> Is in them. May perpetual youth
> Keep dry their light from tears.

He rejoiced in all those movements which enlarge

the area of English freedom, and maintain the stability of national life,

> By shaping some august decree
> Which kept her throne unshaken still,
> Broad-based upon her people's will,
> And compass'd by the inviolate sea.

In all these things he was English with Englishmen. But he could look beyond one land. He could take the deepest interest in the intellectual movements which were everywhere abroad,

> When Science reaches forth her arms
> To feel from world to world, and charms
> Her secret from the latest moon.

And with all this wide-hearted sympathy he kept alive a devotion for the domestic elements which give grace, strength, and constancy to life, and he showed, as you know if you have read those touching lines—some of his last—to the very end his devotion to the pure home life of England. In his old age he could cherish the love and renew the joy of his youth. In his home at Aldworth the roses on the terrace bloomed, and in their beauty and fragrance, renewed from year to year, he saw the emblem of the home love which dies not with the years. Thus he was truly one with all English life, in its traditions and its aspirations, its reverence for order, and its passion for liberty, its sturdy industry and its love of home; and when he sang, he gave voice to what

had been already in our hearts. His muse was for us an Æolian harp, and every movement in English life thrilled music from his life, and we understood that he was with us as we thought, as we fought, and as we aspired.

But that was not all. If the poet is to be the child of his age, it is indispensable, as Schiller said, "that he should not be its pupil nor its favourite," that is to say, if a man has a song to sing at all, and it is only a song to his age, then it will be a dying song at the best. It is not the part of the poet to be merely the Æolian harp, that sings only in obedience to the passing breeze of popular feeling, and gives back therefore changeful and uncertain music. The poet must be one who descends from his height, and his harp must be within his grasp ; his fingers must strike the strings, and his own hand must bring forth the music. He must not only give voice to a people's thoughts : he must have a message for their hearts. If he is to sing to any high and holy purpose his song must not merely be the song of to-day, but the touch of eternity must be in it. It is not enough for a man to stand and listen to the babbles of the present, which float up more or less melodiously to his ears, and weave these into song, and give them back to his contemporaries. The poet, if he is

to stand in the higher rank of poets, must always have a touch of the prophet in him ; and those great and eternal realities which are the background of all human life, which are indispensable to it as the source of its interpretation and its fruitfulness, must have some place and portion in his life and in his genius. Only the song which is consecrated by these can attain a deathless strain.

It has been said that Tennyson was half a Pagan. I know not how it may strike you, but any such utterance appears to me unseemly. It is not wise or right that we should imagine a man's past, allow our fancy to probe into the depths of his own personal convictions, and put our own interpretation upon his utterances, and then declare to the public our doubts. There is a reverence which is due to all men, and not least due to those who were great and serviceable amongst us. But what does the accusation mean ? If it means that Tennyson could not always utter his thoughts in the language which was pleasing to some who profess and call themselves Christians, it probably means that he did not use the shibboleth of their sect. Further, I would ask, does any man expect that a poet should clothe his verses in theological form ? But if something more is meant, if it is meant that there was an aversion on his part to all dogmatic statements of truth, then I ask you to remember that there

are two attitudes of mind with respect to forms of faith, which may easily be confused. It is true that you will find phrases in Tennyson's poems which express a distrust of strong dogmatic forms. He loved to speak of our little systems as being "the broken lights" of God, and he loved to believe that God was more than they. He was impatient, if you will, of these forms; but there are two kinds of impatience in such matters—and these we must distinguish. There is an impatience of the form of truth which is derived from an impatience of the truth itself. There are some men who would be impatient of any attempt to define our spiritual or moral conceptions, for their impatience is an impatience of all moral and spiritual truth. But there is another impatience, and that is the impatience of definition on the part of a man who feels that such truths must transcend our efforts to define them. It is the difference between your impatience of the thing I want to say and your impatience of the way in which I say it. They are two distinct things. With those who are impatient of all spiritual truth Tennyson had no sympathy whatever; but he had a sympathy with those who were impatient of the formal statement of truth, only because they felt that all formal statements of truth must of necessity fall below the greatness and the grandeur of the truth itself. There is a reverent

impatience of forms, and there is an irreverent impatience of them. An irreverent impatience of formal dogma means impatience of all spiritual truth; but a reverent impatience of formal dogma may be but the expression of the feeling that the truth must be larger, purer, nobler than any mere human expression or definition of it. With this latter attitude of mind he had sympathy. He had sympathy with it, and he expressed that sympathy in song: he could understand those who seemed

> to have reach'd a purer air,
> Whose faith has centre everywhere,
> Nor cares to fix itself to form.

He urged men to "cling to faith, beyond the forms of faith." But while he did this he also recognised clearly the importance and the value of definitions of truth, and his counsel to the very man who prided himself upon his emancipation from forms was:

> Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
> Her early Heaven, her happy views;
> Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
> A life that leads melodious days.
>
> Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
> Her hands are quicker unto good:
> Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
> To which she links a truth divine!

He warned the man proud of his emancipation from

formal faith, that in a world of so many confusions he might meet with ruin,

> Ev'n for want of such a type.

And we are not surprised that he should say, knowing how insidious are the evil influences which gather round us,

> Hold thou the good ; define it well,
> For fear Divine Philosophy
> Should push beyond her mark and be
> Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

And thus he had sympathy with those who feel that faith is larger and nobler than form, and at the same time he had tenderness and appreciation for those who find their faith helped by form. May I give one illustration which comes to my memory? On one occasion I asked him the question, whether the three ladies whom he represented as accompanying King Arthur on his voyage were rightly interpreted to be Faith, Hope and Charity. He answered, with a sort of touch of natural, intellectual impatience, "They are and they are not ; I hate to be limited to these interpretations, for the thought is always greater than this or that immediate or special interpretation." To him, as to so many, truth is so infinitely great that all we can do with our poor human utterances is to try and clothe it in such language as will make it clear

to ourselves, and clear to those to whom God sends us with a message, but meanwhile, above us and our thoughts—above our broken lights—God in His mercy, God in His love, God in His infinite nature, is greater than all.

But though the Divine Power which rules us all was to him greater than our poor thoughts, it was no mere abstraction: it was to him an intimate near reality—more real than the shadowy things we call real. Nothing in his view had life or meaning apart from God. "In God alone all things and all beings exist." The grasp of his spirit on Him was firm. God to him was the wise and tender source of life, the brotherly sympathy and love, the revered and supporting power of life—"My Father, and my Brother, and my God." Prayer to him was a deep and great reality.

> More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of.

In short, if it be given to us in Christianity to believe that this world, with all its changes and chances, its sorrows and perplexities, is yet ruled over by fatherly love, then it was a Christian spirit which sang a faith above sight and

> trusted God was love indeed
> And love Creation's final law—
> Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
> With ravine, shriek'd against his creed.

If it be given to us in Christianity to believe that in Christ there is to those who surrender themselves to Him a redeeming love and influencing force, then it was a Christian spirit which sang to the "Strong Son of God, immortal Love":

> Thou seemest human and divine,
> The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
> Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

If it be given to us in Christianity to believe that always there is a Divine spirit which can soothe our sorrows, stimulate our energies, and by inward help lift us above the shocks of chance, the changes of circumstance, and the depressions of temperament, then it is a Christian spirit which sang:

> Be near me when my light is low,
> When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
> And tingle; and the heart is sick,
> And all the wheels of Being slow.

There is another aspect of religious life on which I would touch, viz., its inward spiritual struggle. What message has Tennyson concerning that side of religion, in which man is to be considered as a being struggling towards a better and nobler sort of life? He shows us how intensely he realized the significance of the spiritual conflict which goes on in human hearts. He expressed a noble scorn

of those who let themselves be swept away by the wild impulses of their baser nature.

> I envy not the beast that takes
> His license in the field of time,
> Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
> To whom a conscience never wakes.

His conception was that our natures were capable of elevation and purification: the body was given to us by God to be made a pure and a nobler habitation —a temple meet for Him; the body is the instrument which represents us here in Time, but is destined to be, after all, mastered by the power of the Spirit within us, and

> The poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy human ghost
> Will vanish and give place to the beauty which endures.

The purpose of our life is achieved in the victory over the lower nature, the emancipation of the higher, and the spiritualisation of all the powers of life! This finds expression in one of his latest poems. He pictures old age with its infirmities: the slow creeping years have brought their portion of pain: life seems to be going out in needless torment. Age cries out against the bitterness of a lot which after the experience of the capacity for joy has brought man so low; and the answer comes:

> Done for thee! Starved the wild beast that was linked to thee
> eighty years back.

The voice cries courage—

> Hold the sceptre, human soul, and rule thy province of the brute.

The struggle has been a struggle upwards; the purpose of life and its pains was the spiritualisation of man's thoughts and powers. It led to a state which man would acknowledge was rest, but not the rest of stagnation. The voice of complaint would realise and rejoice in peace when the former things were passed away:

> I hear no yelp of the beast, and man is quiet at last,
> As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of the height that is higher.

But this elevation is not reached without the help of One greater than ourselves. The progress of spiritual life is not by solitary human effort, nor by the blind force of mere material nature: it is by the distinct, consciously-recognised help of Him who is not far from any one of us. It is a help to which faith can guide us; for in the conflict of life faith is essential:

> We have but faith, we cannot know.

Once when walking and speaking of some of the dark things of life, he suddenly stopped and said. "After all, the strongest thing is Faith." Faith

bids us look upward and lay hold of the power which is helping us, Faith can

> reach a hand through time and catch
> The far off interest of tears.

Faith can transmute the pain of life into profit. The circumstances of life may be made a ministry of moral good; so he prayed

> Steel me with patience, soften me with grief.

He knew that the forces which seemed adverse to man might yet be cooperant to his higher good by moulding him to nobler and godlike character. And chiefest then he prayed for faith, that power of spiritual alchemy which can turn life's most unpromising things to gold.

> Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray
> Till this embattled wall of unbelief,
> My prison, not my fortress, fall away.

He might be called to face dark things, and to set forth at last upon the great unknown and untravelled sea beyond, but the Eternal Love is near at all times, and however shadowy it may be to us in the darkness, it would not always be in shadow. Somewhere hereafter it would greet him with a smile. So he looked forward to death as bringing the revelation of the love which guided in all the difficult ways of life; and in the poem which he desired should always

be printed as the last in his works, he sang—surely it is impossible to mistake his meaning—

> I hope to see my Pilot face to face
> When I have crost the bar.

One word, and I have done. I have tried to speak of the harmony of his life, the harmony which drew his great energy, his great gifts, his intellectual powers to one great object. The sympathies of his nature responded to the movements of his day and the feelings of his countrymen. With him also was the larger thought of that Divine life in which we all live. All these—his personal endowments, his sympathetic and patriotic heart, his profound recognition of the spiritual and eternal powers of existence blended together and found expression in his magic gift of song, and ever he strove that the song which he sang should be sweet and pure, strong and ennobling to the minds of men! The lesson is clear. Our lives—how many of them!—are but as scattered, ineffective things; our passions carry us one way, our wills another, our moral sense grows enfeebled, we hesitate, we vacillate, and then our life, which might have been filled with some hints of a Divine glory, becomes strengthless and inglorious. Gather all your powers together! —this is the lesson—discipline and harmonise them! Do not let your intellect be, as it were, given up to one thing, your moral sense to

another, your emotions to another! Bring them all into harmony. Consecrate all to some worthy aim. Without this, intellectual effort is a barren pastime, moral power useless as a rudder in a motionless ship, emotional force but the tedious beat of the dull waves of a tideless sea. But when one great and noble purpose dominates the life, then all powers find their fitting use and fall into their proper place. Take up your life, and exert the privilege and power of manhood, and rule in the kingdom of your own being. Let your mind be occupied with what is noble and true. Let your will be consecrated to what is right and good. Let your passions and your emotions be under the guidance of what is pure. And that this may be so, dedicate your life to the duty which God sets before you; then your life will not give forth doubtful and discordant notes; but

> mind and soul according well
> May make one music!

What we need is the inspiration of some fresh and masterful devotion. Where shall we find such an inspiration, unless it be in the spirit of Christ? Where His spirit dwells there comes the inspiration of a nobler ambition for the use of life, and desires of a purer character take possession of the soul. We desire to be like to Him, and to serve man in our

day and generation. Let this spirit have sway, and your life, if not your muse, will give forth song. In your home, in your business, in your civic duties, there will be a harmony and a consecrating presence, and

God shall strike a glory through your days.

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